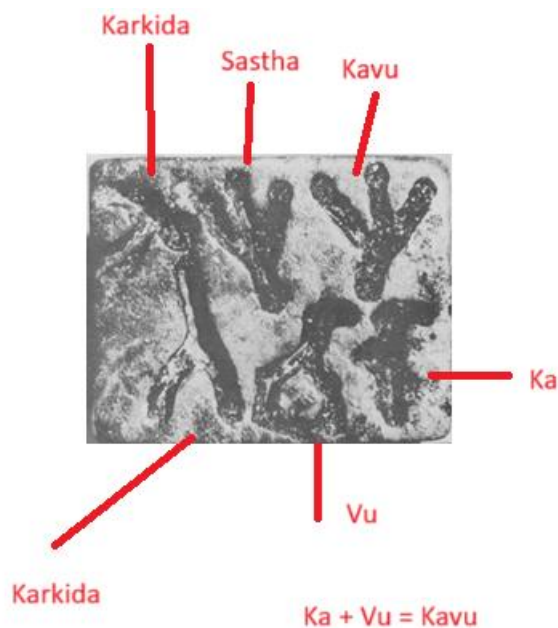


Anai -Kottai, Srilanka -seal inscriptions

The Anaikoddai seal is a soapstone seal that was found in Anaikoddai, Sri Lanka, during archaeological excavations of a megalithic burial site by a team of researchers from the University of Jaffna. The seal was originally part of a signet ring and contains one of the oldest Brahmi inscriptions mixed with megalithic graffiti symbols on the island. It was dated paleographically to the early third century BC.[1]

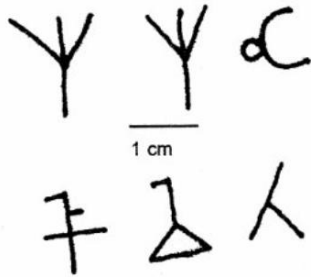
Although many pottery fragments have been found in excavations throughout Sri Lanka and South India that had both Brahmi and megalithic graffiti symbols side by side, the Anaikoddai seal is distinguished by having each written in a manner that indicates that the megalithic graffiti symbols may be a translation of the Brahmi. Read from right to left, the legend is read by most scholars in early Tamil as Koveta (Ko-ve-ta கௌத). (1)

'Ko' and 'Veta' both mean 'King' in Tamil and refer to a chieftain here. It is comparable to such names as Ko Atan and Ko Putivira occurring in contemporary Tamil-Brahmi inscriptions. The trident symbol is equated with 'King', and is also found after a Tamil-Brahmi inscription of the Chera dynasty, thus supporting this interpretation. (2)













Picture courtesy – Ponnambalam Raghupathy. (3)

As observed by many scholars, this seal contains bilingual inscriptions. The first line is written in the Indus script, and the second line is written in Tamil Brahmi inscriptions. The first symbol is not clear in the above picture. Hence, I have taken a picture from Rajan and Osmund's research paper, and the picture is given below for easy reference. (2)

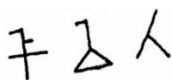



This picture is in the reverse direction of the other images on the net; I don't know why the authors wanted to present it in this format. Anyhow, we can proceed with whatever material is available.

The first symbol [] looks like a modified form of the Karkida symbol [] of the Indus script. Karkida means a ritual held for dead people (Pithrus) in the month of "Karkidam" (July -August) in Kerala. The same ritual is held as "Sarva Pitri Amavasya" in the rest of India in September or October. The second symbol is the Sastha [] symbol, indicating the word "god." [] This symbol indicates the idea of a branch (Sahastha means branch living god), thereby the word Sastha (God). Refer to my book for more information on this symbol. (4) This two-symbol combination is very popular and has often been used in the Indus seal inscriptions and Tamil Nadu graffiti symbols. Hence, I assume the combination of the symbols to be read as 'Karkida sastha'.

The last symbol in the first row, again, the branch symbol (), is slightly different; it is not the same Sastha symbol, it is not trishul, but the "Ka" () symbol, meaning "Soul" in Indus seal inscriptions. But, in Tamil Nadu, this format of two "Ka" symbols appearing in twin form () occurs not in IVC seals. If we consider the other way, the two-hand symbol is the same as Egypt's two upraised hands () symbol. Most probably, the second () ka symbol means "Kavu" (sacrifice). Finally, it can be read as "Karkida-Sastha-Kavu". It means a sacrifice was made to appease the karkida ritual god, "Rudra", to consider favourably the dead man's soul (Ka = ) in heaven.

Minor variations in this reading do not affect the overall meaning of this inscription. Because this seal had been found along with the skeleton of a dead person. I have been saying for a long time that all these Indian Valley Civilisation seals and Tamil graffiti are related to death rituals. It should be either the dead person's name or some ritual about death. Here, in the present case, it does not appear to be the dead person's name. The only possibility is that it should be the name of a god and a sacrifice to him.



Now, let us read the second line. The Srilankan funeral priest wrote the second line in a boustrophedon way; hence, we have to start reading from the reverse direction of the first line. It is written as Ka- Vu- Karkida, the first two letters are written in Brahmi script, but the priest had fallen back to the Indus script symbol for the last letter . It is a mixed form of writing; hence, much care is necessary for interpretation.

References

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4. **Jeyakumar(Book).** *Indus symbols dictionary.* s.l. Pothei Publication -Online, 2022.